

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 MCT-01 SY-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05

H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-15 IO-14 CA-01 HA-05 /098 W

-----107175 240753Z /14

R 231522Z MAR 78

FM AMCONSUL BELFAST

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1880

INFO AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

UNCLAS BELFAST 058

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS, UK, EI

SUBJECT: NORTHERN IRELAND TERRORISM: SYSTEMATIC ATTACKS
ON SECURITY FORCES

REF: (A) DUBLIN 00345, (B) BELFAST 47, (C) BELFAST 41

1. SUMMARY. IN THE PAST TWO WEEKS NEWS OF TERRORISM HAS NOT BEEN SPECTACULAR, BUT THE PROVISIONAL IRA CONTINUED ITS ATTACKS ON SECURITY FORCES, AND ONE SOLDIER WAS KILLED. ONLY A FEW FIRE BOMBS WERE USED AGAINST SMALL TARGETS. WE NOTE NO MORE LOYALIST RETALIATORY ATTACKS ON REPUBLICANS, AS FEARED (REF B). THE POLICE WERE SUCCESSFUL IN CHARGING SUSPECTS IN TWO IMPORTANT INCIDENTS, AND A MUCH WANTED GUNMAN WAS CAUGHT WOUNDED. SECURITY WILL BE TIGHTENED UP OVER THE EASTER HOLIDAYS, AS REPUBLICANS COMMEMORATE THE 1916 EASTER RISING. END SUMMARY.

2. PIRA ATTACKS: THE PROVISIONALS MOUNTED A NUMBER OF ATTACKS, SOME OF WHICH ENDANGERED PASSERS BY. AN AMERICAN M60 MACHINEGUN PROBABLY WAS USED IN A CROSS-BORDER ATTACK ON AN ARMY PATROL NEAR LONDONDERRY. GOI POLICE COOPERATED CLOSELY WITH THE BRITISH ARMY IN INVESTIGATING THE INCIDENT. GUNMEN NEAR STRABANE SOUTH OF DERRY FIRED ON POLICE AFTER
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ENTICING THEM OUT ON A BOMB HOAX CALL. TWO POLICE WERE WOUNDED. A GANG OF YOUTHS BROKE A SOLDIER'S SKULL DURING A ROCK ATTACK IN DERRY. IN WEST BELFAST GUNMEN TOOK OVER A PRIVATE HOME FROM WHICH THEY FIRED ON AN ARMY PATROL ENTERING FORT MONAGH. ONE SOLDIER WAS WOUNDED, AND ONE ROUND ENTERED A GIRL'S SCHOOL. OVER THE MARCH 18-19 WEEKEND THREE BURSTS OF AUTOMATIC FIRE WERE AIMED AT A POLICE VEHICLE IN CROWDED

LOWER FALLS ROAD, AND A PRISON OFFICER IN HIS CAR WAS FIRED ON FROM A PASSING CAR. BOTH HE AND A CIVILIAN IN ANOTHER CAR WERE HURT BY GLASS FROM THEIR WINDSHIELDS. THE SHOOTING OCCURRED ON THE MAIN BRIDGE OVER THE LAGAN RIVER IN DOWNTOWN BELFAST. SEVERAL SHOTS WERE FIRED AT THE POLICE STATION IN BENBURB, NEAR ARMAGH, AND THE GATE HOUSE OF ARMAGH'S BEST HOTEL, OWNED BY A LEADING UNIONIST POLITICIAN, WAS DAMAGED BY A BOMB. THE CONSUL GENERAL HAD VISITED BENBURB AND MET A POLITICIAN AT THE HOTEL A FEW DAYS BEFORE.

3. POSSIBLE PIRA RETALIATION: IN PORTADOWN, WHERE LOYALIST PARAMILITARIES KILLED TWO CATHOLICS EARLIER IN THE MONTH (REF B), GUNMEN SHOT A PROTESTANT IN HIS HOME. AND IN ARDBOE, NEAR WHICH ARMY UNDERCOVERMEN KILLED A YOUNG PROVISIONAL IN FEBRUARY (REF C), GUNMEN USED A RUSE TO ATTACK AND WOUND A PART-TIME SOLDIER OF THE ULSTER DEFENSE REGIMENT. THESE ATTEMPTS MIGHT HAVE BEEN IN RETALIATION FOR THE EARLIER KILLINGS.

4. ARMY UNDERCOVER OPERATIONS: ON MARCH 16 IN WEST BELFAST TWO CIVILIANS WERE SERIOUSLY WOUNDED AND A SOLDIER SLIGHTLY WOUNDED IN AN EXCHANGE THAT IS STILL NOT CLEAR. THE AUTHORITIES SAY THE TWO GRAPPLED WITH A SOLDIER IN CIVILIAN CLOTHES AND SHOT HIM, AFTER WHICH A PATROL SHOT THEM BOTH. REPUBLICANS CLAIM THAT WITNESSES CONTRADICT THIS VERSION, AND SAY THE CIVILIANS WERE NOT ARMED. THE SAME NIGHT IN UNCLASSIFIED

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CENTRAL ULSTER GUNMEN CHALLENGED BY A PATROL SERIOUSLY WOUNDED TWO SOLDIERS. ONE SOLDIER DIED LATER. THE NEXT DAY POLICE FOLLOWED BLOOD TRACES TO A MUCH WANTED PROVO: FRANCIS JOSEPH SEAN HUGHES, SUFFERING FROM A GUNSHOT WOUND. BHUGHES IS TAGGED FOR TEN OR A DOZEN MURDERS AND IS WIDELY BELIEVED TO HAVE RETURNED TO NORTHERN IRELAND A COUPLE OF MONTHS AGO FROM LETTERKENNY, COUNTY DONEGAL, AN HOUR'S DRIVE ACROSS THE BORDER FROM LONDONDERRY.

5. POLICE SUCCESSES: POLICE CHARGED A MAN FOR THE MURDER OF A SOLDIER AND CIVILIAN WOMAN SEARCHER MARCH 3 (PARA FOUR REF B). AND ANOTHER MAN WAS CHARGED AS THE ONE WHO DISPLAYED AN M60 FOR PHOTOGRAPHERS AT THE BLOODY SUNDAY ANNIVERSARY MARCH IN LONDONDERRY IN LATE JANUARY (PARA TWO REF A). THE POLICE SAID HE WAS IDENTIFIED FROM PUBLISHED PHOTOGRAPHS BECAUSE HIS STOCKING MASK WAS SO TIGHT IT REVEALED HIS FEATURES.

6. EASTER DEMONSTRATIONS: SECURITY IS TIGHTENING UP IN EXPECTATION OF TROUBLE DURING THE EASTER HOLIDAYS. MANY PARADES AND VISITS TO CEMETERIES HAVE BEEN ORGANIZED IN COMMEMORATION OF THE 1916 RISING. PROVISIONAL SINN FEIN

PROPAGANDA IS PUSHING ALLEGED POLICE TORTURE OF SUSPECTS,
AND THE CAMPAIGN OF PRISONERS FOR THE RETURN OF POLITICAL
STATUS. ONLY CONVERTS LISTEN, AND THEY SEEM TO BE GETTING
NO RESONANCE FROM CHARGES THAT TWO PRISONERS "ON THE
BLANKET" ARE ON HUNGER STRIKE.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: SECURITY, TERRORISTS, UNCONVENTIONAL WARFARE
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 23 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978BELFAS00058
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780129-1274
Format: TEL
From: BELFAST
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780334/aaaabcka.tel
Line Count: 123
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: a3421fbf-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: ONLY
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: ONLY
Reference: 78 DUBLIN 345, 78 BELFAST 47, 78 BELFAST 41
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 15 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3230998
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NORTHERN IRELAND TERRORISM: SYSTEMATIC ATTACKS ON SECURITY FORCES
TAGS: PINS, UK, EI
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/a3421fbf-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014